

CHAPTER 20

TACTICAL PERIODIZATION

NICK COWELL

Nick Cowell is the head women's soccer coach at St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas. Nick is in the top three winningest head coaches of all time in NCAA Division 2 soccer. Nick is an expert in tactical periodization and has successfully applied it to the collegiate setting. Nick taught himself Portuguese to be able to translate Vitor Frade's original texts (Vitor Frade is the creator of tactical periodization and developed the methodology out of the University of Porto).

Are you willing to learn a language to hear the truth about tactical periodization — How to create a game model — Principles, sub-principles, and sub-sub-principles — The morphocycle — How to handle multiple game weeks — A team that thinks with one brain

Raymond Verheijen, the Dutch coach educator and former Wales

assistant coach, has a unique way of putting motivation into perspective. If you were to tell him you can't do something—for example, maybe you tell him that you can't run a mile in under 6 minutes—his response would be something along the lines of, “What if I put a lion behind you?” There is nothing like necessity when it comes to motivation.

Nick Cowell found himself with a lion behind him when trying to solve a problem specific to college soccer. Nick was confounded by the brevity of the college soccer season. Nearly a decade into his college coaching career, Nick started to become frustrated with the inevitable peak and decline of his team's performance that ultimately defined each college season. “The college season is so short and every game is so important that I didn't want my team to have performance peaks and valleys. No game is more important than any other; I mean, you could lose a game at the beginning of the season that could cost you a postseason bid. I was looking for a way to create stability of our performance, and that is when I came across the work of Vitor Frade and tactical periodization.”

Vitor Frade's work on the methodology of tactical periodization is written solely in Portuguese. Although a lot of coaches have been able to learn through translations of the work, the translations aren't necessarily a true representation of the theories. In fact, Frederico Morais—a former student of Vitor Frade—told me in an interview that, “Everything published in English is totally wrong. There are so many misrepresentations.”

Fortunately for us, Nick Cowell—a former language major in college—taught himself Portuguese to be able to understand the theories of tactical periodization more accurately. “I basically taught myself with books, CDs, and some different things. It wasn’t too uncommon to see me at a red light speaking Portuguese to myself. I probably looked a little crazy, but I made it my goal to learn the language. Once I learned the language, it just opened up a whole new world of books, articles, and papers that were coming out of Portugal at the time.”

Nick became enthralled with tactical periodization after reading a Portuguese biography about Jose Mourinho. Being able to speak and read Portuguese meant that Nick could locate those source texts and get to the heart of Mourinho’s methodology. Eventually, all of that reading and researching led Nick to the research being done by a professor out of the University of Porto named Vitor Frade.

Vitor Frade is the father of tactical periodization. Unfortunately, similar to the way *possession* and *positional play* have become buzzwords, so too has *tactical periodization*. In fact, I don’t think there is a coach alive that doesn’t consider himself a tactical expert and because most coaches think they are tactical experts, they all think they are using tactical periodization, which couldn’t be further from the truth. Tactical periodization is not training with tactics. It is a methodology about much, much more than that.

WHAT IS TACTICAL PERIODIZATION?

Nick's journey led him to a fairly simple definition of a very complex methodology. "The basic belief of tactical periodization is that the most important factor in a team's success is the way the team plays together. The team needs to understand a central game model or way of playing." Tactical periodization knows that the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Tactical periodization is aimed at bringing about a specific style of game through collective and individual intentions. What does this mean? It means that you train and teach your game model every single day in a variety of ways so that the product you see on each match day reflects the game model (i.e., playing style) you want. Instead of drilling technique or things in isolation, we train the game model so that our players can practice their collective interactions to reveal a collective intention on game day.

Traditional training methodology calls for the isolation of fitness, technique, psychology, strength training, and other trainable characteristics of soccer players. Traditionally, soccer players do fitness with the fitness coach, technique work with the technical coach, strength training with the strength coach, and so on, and only after every player has developed competencies in all of these areas are they brought together to work on tactics. The technical prose needed to fully refute the traditional mechanistic approach to training is well beyond the scope of this book, but, in their

1997 text, *The Art of Systems Thinking*, Joseph O'Connor and Ian McDermott paint a perfect picture that illustrates the inadequacy of the traditional mechanistic and isolated approach to training. "Nobody would take apart a piano to look for its sound." In other words, the sound is created through the interactions of many things. Soccer is not something that is a result of fitness, technique, tactics, and psychology. It is a constant flow of all those things interwoven together for 90 minutes. They do not exist separate from one another in soccer. "Tactics are the central part of the philosophy and they are what coordinate all of the physical, technical, and psychological; they all come from the tactical work that you do on the field."

Soccer is a complex system which can be looked at as a series of elements interacting between themselves in order to reach a specific outcome. These elements must have a similar intention and understanding between them to successfully navigate the moments of order and disorder that characterize soccer. A soccer team is a complex system, which means so too is the opponent. "A game—where you have one complex system competing with another complex system—is another level of complexity. Therefore, there always exists this tension of the order you want within your team and the disorder that is created by two complex systems interacting." This is where the role of tactics enter into the discussion of tactical periodization.

The complexity of soccer creates many unbalanced situations that require both teams to seek out a specific model of self-organization. Therefore, a complex system (e.g., a soccer team) is

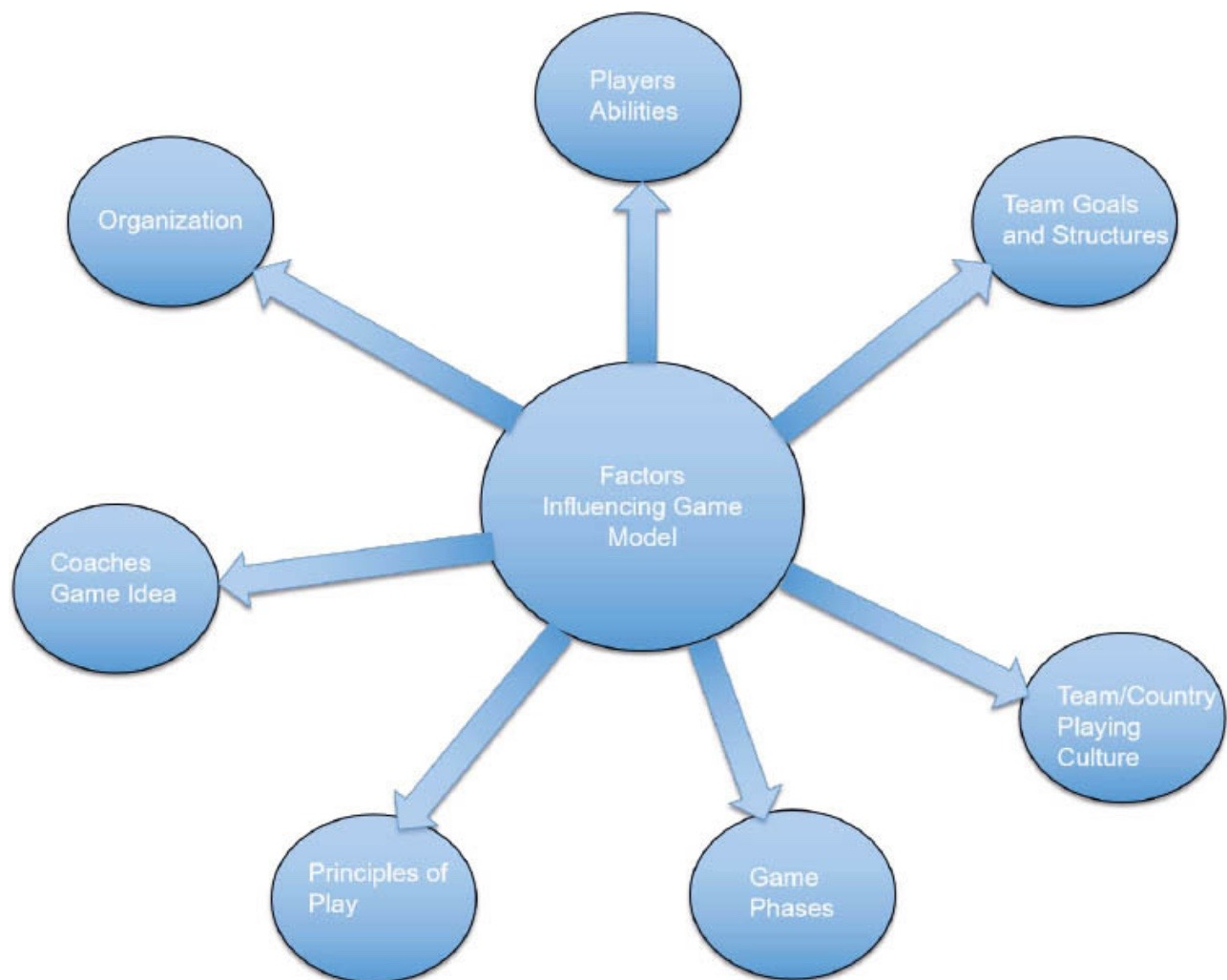
always in a dynamic state moving between and within phases of order and disorder.

I will try not to make this section too wordy and esoteric, although the topic is complex. It just further proves the point that soccer is not simple, and not only is soccer coaching an art, it is very much a science, too. In an effort to make it simple, let's refer back to the idea of a team moving in and out of phases of order and disorder. A simple way to think about it is as follows: Imagine the opponent has a goal kick and they are going to build out of the back. You, as a coach, have trained your team how to press a team that is building from the goal kick. In other words, you have taught them how to self-organize in that moment of the game to establish *order*. Now, if the opponent is able to play out of your pressure and find a player that turns and starts dribbling towards your goal, there now exists a moment of *disorder* in the game. The organization of your team's press is now disorganized. Therefore, the key to any match lies in seeing which team can self-organize faster and more efficiently. For example, if the opponent is able to set up and organize their attacking organization with width and depth before your team can get behind the ball and set up in a low defensive block, then chances are your team will lose the match if that trend continues. Therefore, extreme importance is paid to the self-organization of complex systems in tactical periodization.

Self-organization is something that should be trained. Pre-determined self-organization strategies are developed in something called the game model. The game model can be looked at as your team's organization strategies for the four moments of the game:

attacking, defending, transitioning from defense to attack, and transitioning from attack to defense.

The game model is essential in order to implement tactical periodization successfully. You need to know what you want the collective, group, and individual intentions of your team to be in order to train it. The game model is the interaction between the coach's ideas about the game, the players, the club, the game principles, and much more. It is best summarized in the image below:



The coach needs to consider all these things when deciding how he wants his team to play. What technical, tactical, and physical attributes do your players have or need to have? What are the human, financial, and time constraints of your staff? How do you want your team to attack, defend, and transition? What is your background, preference, and philosophy as a coach? What principles of the game are important to the way you want to play? Basically, a game model is the creation of your team's identity.

PRINCIPLES OF TACTICAL PERIODIZATION

Tactical periodization also involves very specific principles that make it a methodology. These principles are what make the difference between a team that uses tactical periodization and a team that just says they are using it. Again, it is *not* simply training with tactics. Violating any of these principles is to go against the entire methodology.

Principle of Specificity

Training must be a simulation of various situations that occur in the game or are influenced by the game model. As Nick puts it, "every exercise that you design in a practice has to exacerbate your principles of play. Everything that you do should have a relation to how you want your team to play." The principle of specificity also describes training exercises as *fractal* in nature. A

fractal is a geometric figure in which similar patterns occur at progressively smaller scales. In other words, your training exercises should be viewed as mini versions of the game. “Every session should allow the players to learn the principles that you are trying to teach them.”

Nick never starts a training exercise without explaining to his team why they are doing what they are doing. “I think if you can tell your players why you are doing an exercise, you will get much more out of the activity.” Too often, Nick sees coaches using drills or training exercises that they get from other coaches or teams but that usually have nothing to do with how they want their team to play. “Sometimes we fall into this trap of thinking a certain exercise would be good for our team, but if it has no relation to the game model, then the effects of that exercise might take your team backwards. It might lead to confusion and have adverse effects on your team.”

Specificity does not necessarily mean that training should be deterministic. In other words, we have to make sure that we include the randomness and complexity of the game. For example, if you are working on building from the back and every repetition is set up to start from the goalie so the attacking team can get the ball to a specific player before starting over again, that is deterministic. To maintain the randomness and complexity of the game, every activity needs to have attacking, defending, and transitioning; otherwise, training becomes deterministic and unrealistic. Would you ever build from the back to a certain player and then have to start all the way back from the goalkeeper again?

Repetition is important, but not at the expense of realism and randomness.

Another aspect of the principle of specificity is that any training outside of the game model is irrelevant. “The training exercises that don’t relate to the game are not necessary. Even though it might be good to go to the gym and hit on a punching bag for 30 minutes, that is totally unrelated to the game. It is fitness that doesn’t relate to the game.”

Principle of Propensities

This principle basically states that it is necessary to create training exercises that make it possible for certain behaviors to be repeated with great frequency. In other words, if you are training the ability of your team to counter-press, the exercise you create should be constructed in a way that allows for a lot of counter-pressing opportunities to occur.

Principle of Hierarchy

The principle of hierarchy states that a coach should create the game model by starting with the principles. Before coming up with the sub-principles and sub-sub-principles for each moment of the game, the coach needs to determine the essential behaviors he wants his team to exhibit during the four moments of the game. These are discussed later in this chapter in more detail.

Principle of Horizontal Variation

This principle breaks up the playing style of a team into various phases throughout the week. The week should follow the progression of regeneration from the previous game into an acquisition phase to build up the playing ability of the team before tapering off prior to the next game. This principle uses a variety of methods to create two types of variation throughout the week.

1. The level of complexity of the principles are varied throughout the week. Some days, principles are trained, while on other days, sub-principles and sub-sub-principles are trained.
2. The dominant muscle contraction regimen will vary the muscular contraction used between tension, duration, and velocity.

Overall, this principle calls for a day-to-day variation between levels of training intensity and volume.

Principle of Performance Stabilization

The week-to-week cycle is similar in structure so the players can consistently perform on the weekends. Nick Cowell set out on his journey to learn about tactical periodization because of this principle. There is a daily variation that exists in tactical periodization,

but not a weekly variation. Each week follows a similar daily variation called the morphocycle. There is no annual plan, mesocycle, or microcycle. Each weekly morphocycle is the same throughout the entirety of a season.

Principle of Conditioned Exercise

Players should execute similar actions in training that they execute—or need to execute—in the game. This is achieved through position-specific training. This is similar to the principle of specificity, but goes one level deeper. Specificity argues that every training exercise should include the four moments of the game and the principles of the game model. But conditioned exercise argues that each player needs to be training in their specific position or space on the field. In other words, a left back should be played as a left back in training. Playing as a striker will not help that player improve his ability to influence the game model from his specific position.

Principle of Complex Progression

This principle argues that there needs to be a planned progression of tactical ideas throughout a given period. That is why the morphocycle, developed by Vitor Frade, specifies which days are dedicated to training the principles, which are dedicated to training the sub-principles, and which are dedicated to training the sub-sub-principles.

Principles of Tactical Fatigue and Concentration

This principle introduces the psychological and cognitive aspect of soccer. The focus required from the players must be managed and periodized as well. The word *intensity*, which is often thrown around carelessly in soccer, is not useful as a measure of some sort of physical intensity. Instead, Vitor Frade uses *intensity* to refer to the intensity of concentration. In other words, a player having to focus and concentrate on his role during the four moments of the game, as specified by the coach's game model, is very intense. This intensity of concentration should be varied so that some days require great focus, while other days require less focus. Nick Cowell likes to think of it in an even simpler way. "If I had a player run 40 meters, that would be somewhat physically intense. However, if I had that same player run 40 meters while carrying a tray full of glasses, that would be cognitively intense as well. So when I think about the word *intensity*, I think about the concentration required for the duration of the session. Are you asking your players to think a lot about their responsibilities? Then regardless of how much running they are doing, it is intense."

MOMENTS OF THE GAME

It is essential that a coach knows how he wants his team to behave during the four moments of the game. "The game is looked

at in the four major moments and that is the starting point when coming up with your main principles.” The four moments of the game are:

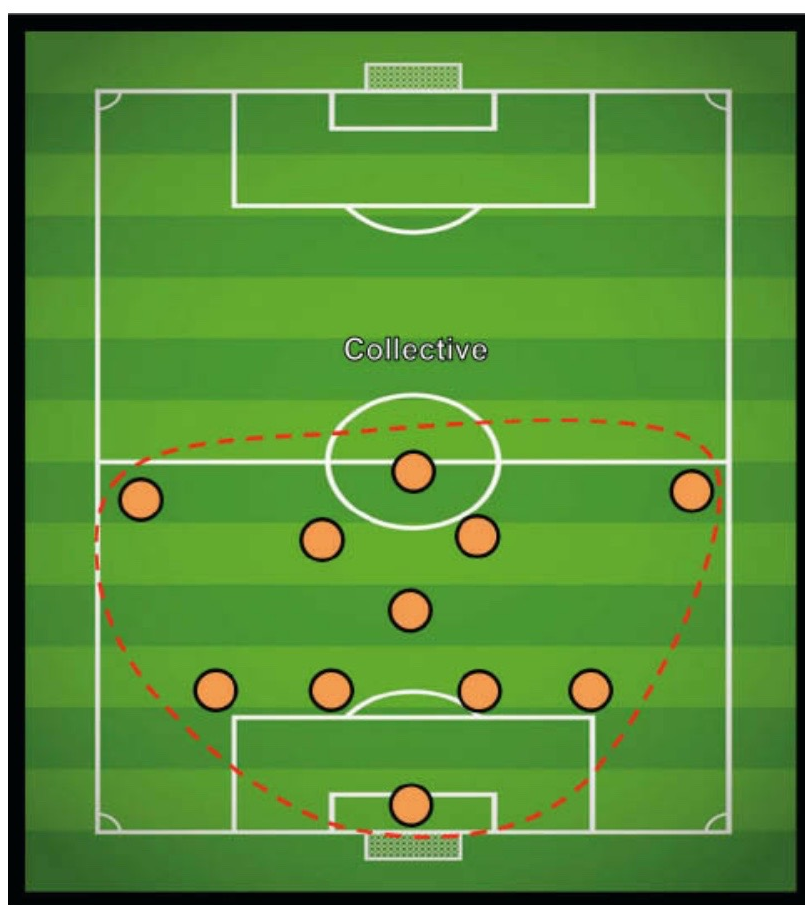
- Offensive organization
- Transition from attack to defense
- Defensive organization
- Transition from defense to attack

PRINCIPLES, SUB-PRINCIPLES, AND SUB-SUB-PRINCIPLES

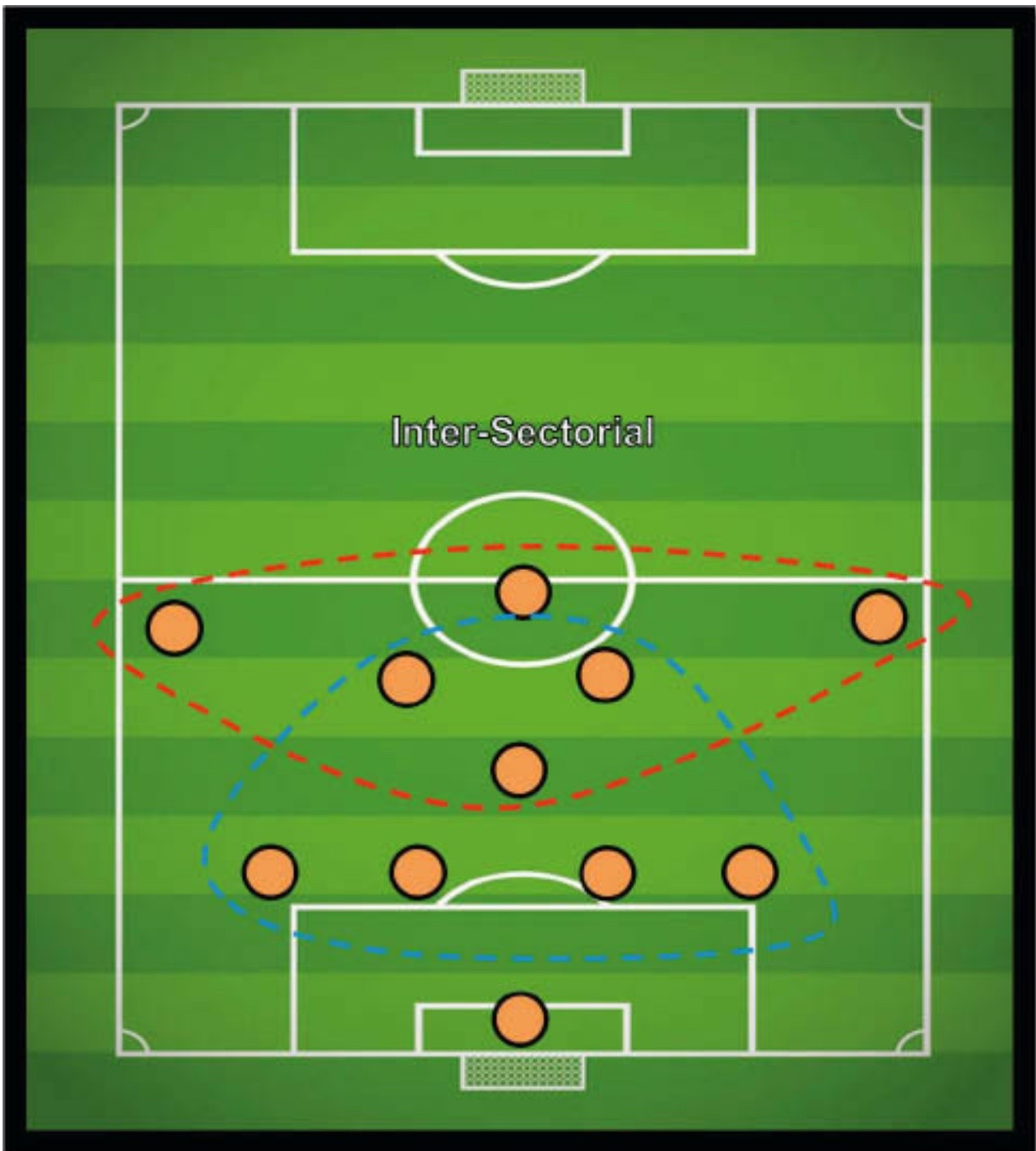
As you begin to work through your game model as a coach, you will need to establish principles, sub-principles, and sub-sub-principles that will help you determine what you train each and every day. The field size, dimensions, duration, number of players, and so on are all dependent on whether we are training the principles, sub-principles, or sub-sub-principles.

Principles are the tactical patterns of action that you want your team to express during the various moments of the game. For example, “your main offensive principle might be to play vertical passes as quickly as possible. In transition from offense to defense, it might be to apply pressure to the ball as quickly as possible.” I like to think of principles as your team-level tactics, the general patterns which characterize your team and give it its identity. Principles are the behaviors that are exhibited by the collective group, defined in the picture to the left. “Eventually you

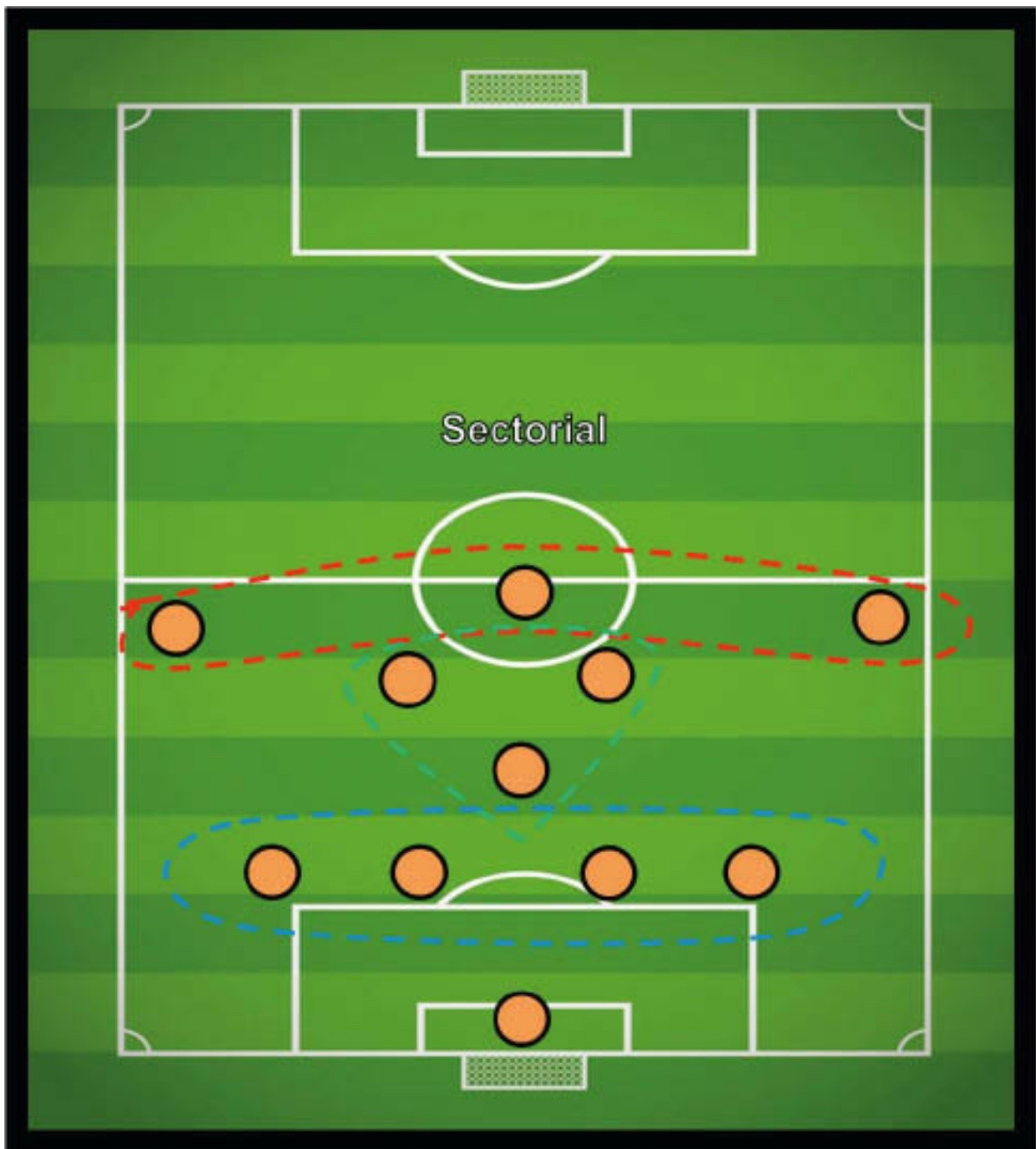
will need to flush out your principles into sub-principles, which are more detailed behaviors of your principles. For example, a sub-principle may specify a certain area of the field in which the principles are to occur. Sub-principles are the intermediate patterns of the game that support the general patterns. In his book *What Is Tactical Periodization?*, Xavier Tamarit defines sub-principles as “specific behaviors that occur inside the previous levels.” In other words, the sub-principles focus on the specific behaviors of inter-sectorial relationships, sectorial relationships, and group relationships that aid in achieving the principles of the team. The sub-principles focus more on specific lines and groups of players in specific moments, but they should never be taught in a way that loses the wholeness of the game.



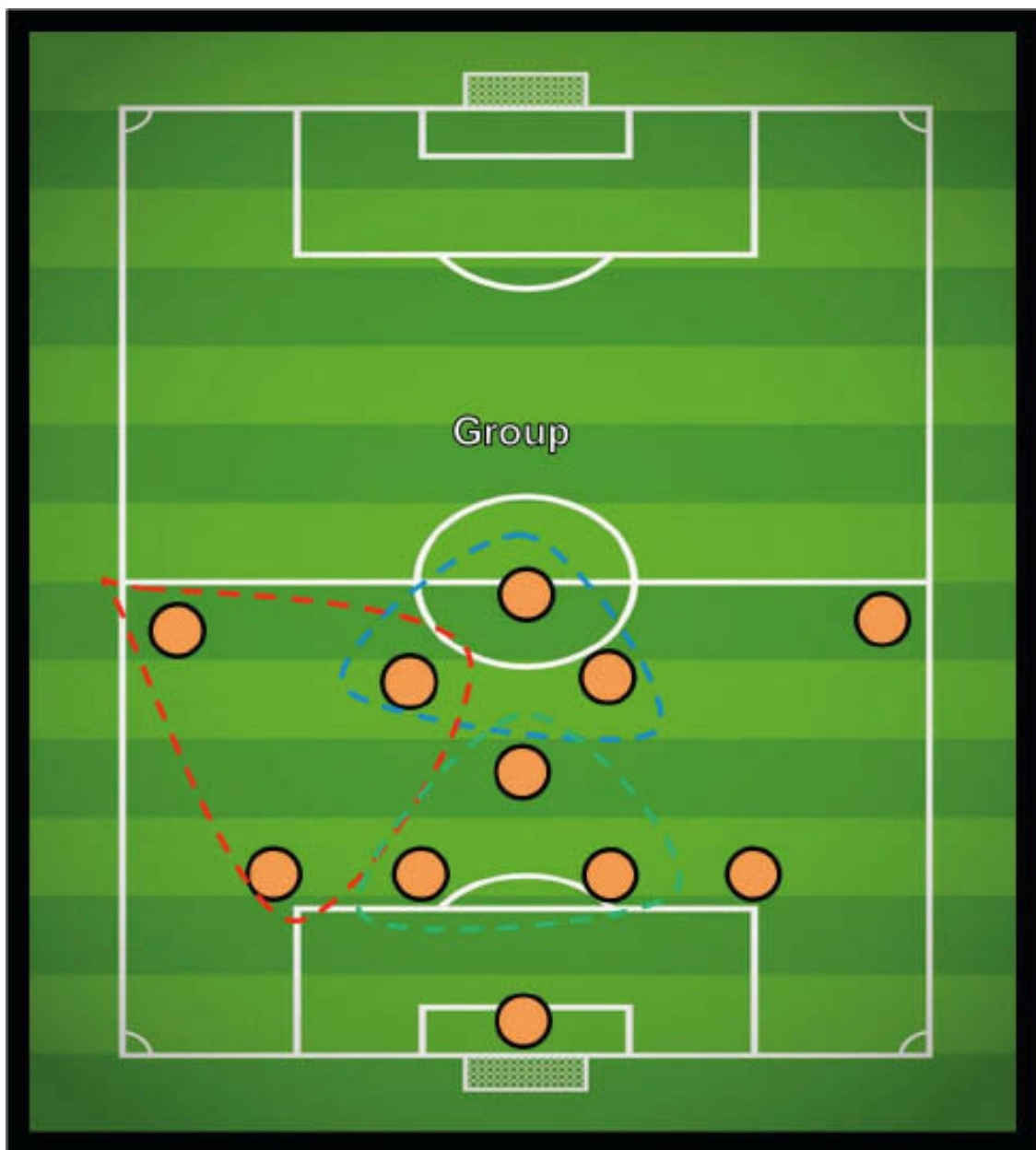
Inter-sectorial relationships deal with players from different lines of the team and how they interact. For example, how do three attackers and three defenders work together in a high press?



Sectorial relationships deal with the various lines of the team. An exercise focused on training the sub-principles of a sector would involve an entire line playing together. A common one used by coaches, even those that don't apply tactical periodization, is any training exercise that works on the back line defending together.



A group involves players from different lines of the team that often work together. An example of this would be training the goalkeeper, center backs, and holding midfielder together in order to work on building out from the back. These players play on different lines of the team—or different sectors—but work together as a group to achieve specific aims of the game model.

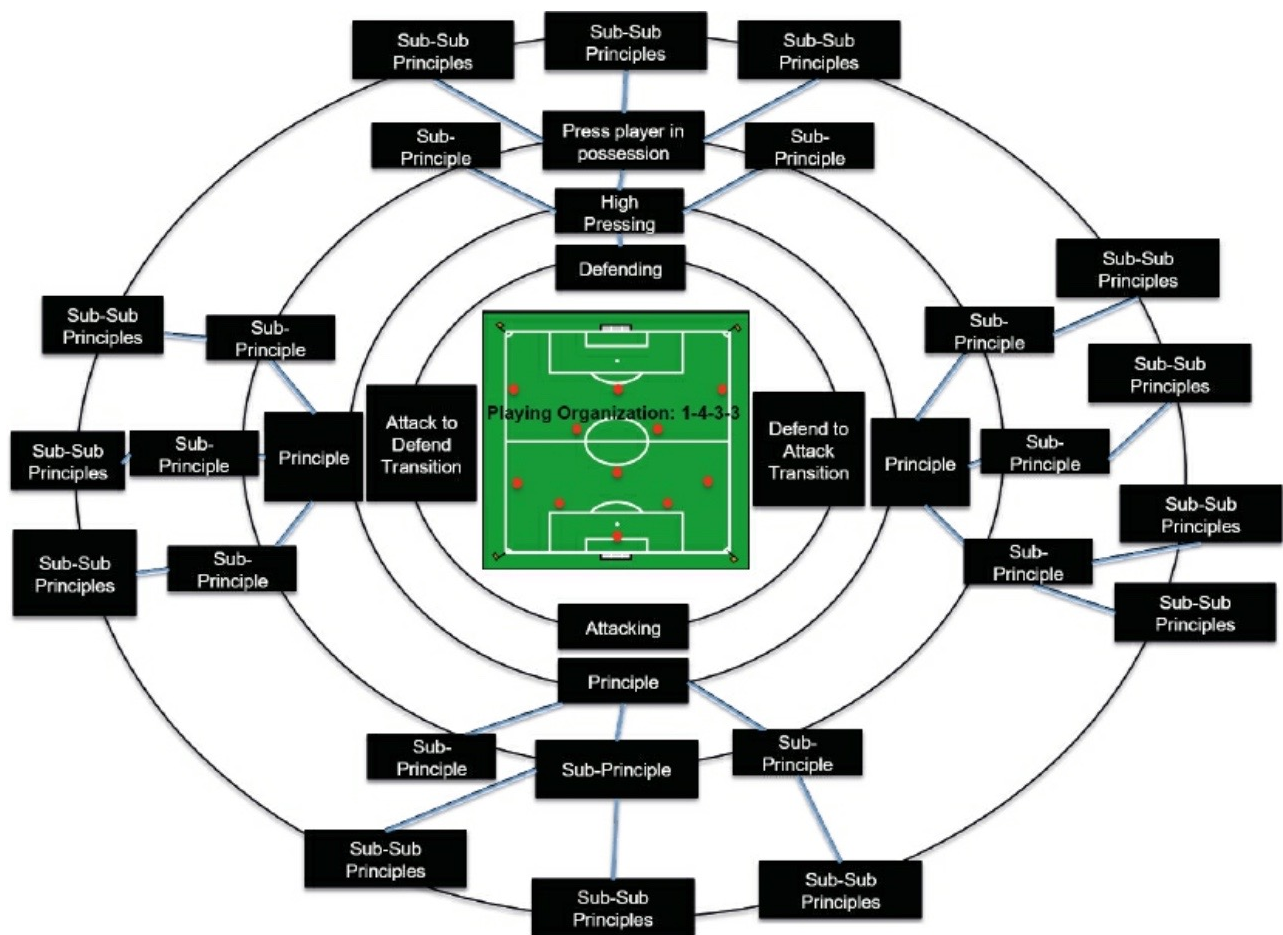


Finally, the sub-sub-principles are the micro patterns. Nick Cowell describes these as the little details of your game model that may change from day to day or week to week, depending on the opponent, results, new players, injuries, and so on. Another way to look at the sub-sub-principles are the individual tactics.

Individual principles are those moments of the game where interactions with teammates are not significant. An example of this may be working on the center back's ability to break the midfield line of opposition pressure with a firm pass played between lines. Defensively, individual tactics can be trained to work on the timing and speed of an individual's role in the pressing structure.



Understanding the dynamics of collective, sectorial, inter-sectorial, group, and individual tactics are vital to creating a game model. The goal is to define the game model by starting with the four moments of the game described earlier. A coach must determine the large principles that will govern how the collective group organizes during those four moments of the game. Within those moments are sub-principles and sub-sub-principles that serve the purpose of defining the behaviors of various lines and groupings of the team within the larger principle.



Here is an example of how a game model may look conceptually.

This gives you an example of how the game model would be built. After considering the identity and ability of each player on your team, the goals and structures of your team, the culture of the team and league, and other things discussed earlier in the chapter, you will want to build a game model by looking at the four moments of the game and how you want your team to behave in each moment. Creating the game model in the way above will help you see what you are asking of your players in each moment of the game. “The idea of the game model is to reduce the complexity of the game for the players. That is the entire point of breaking the game model down by principles, sub-principles, and sub-sub-principles—so that what the coach wants can be delivered in order to reduce the complexity of the game.”

Once you have a clear understanding of the principles, sub-principles, and sub-sub-principles, you can begin thinking about basic formations. Formations should be chosen because they give your team the best chance to organize and execute the game model you have created.

Based on the game model that the coach and his staff create, the next task is to develop training exercises that teach the players the game model. Joao Gama Oliveira, a professor at the University of Porto, identifies the key to creating training exercises from the game model. “The aim is to improve playing quality and organization; therefore, those abilities can only be developed through training situations and drills that require that organization. Training means improving the play.” Jose Mourinho sums it up even more

succinctly: “The goal is to find training exercises that task the team with doing what is expected of them in the game.”

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Game Day	Day Off	Active Recovery	Strength	Duration	Speed	Activation	Game Day

Finally, we get to the periodization portion of tactical periodization. Vitor Frade created the weekly morphocycle to reflect the principles of horizontal alternation in specificity and performance stabilization. The morphocycle includes an off day, two match days, a recovery day, three acquisition days, and one pre-match activation day. During a week where your team plays two games, the weekly structure would look as follows:

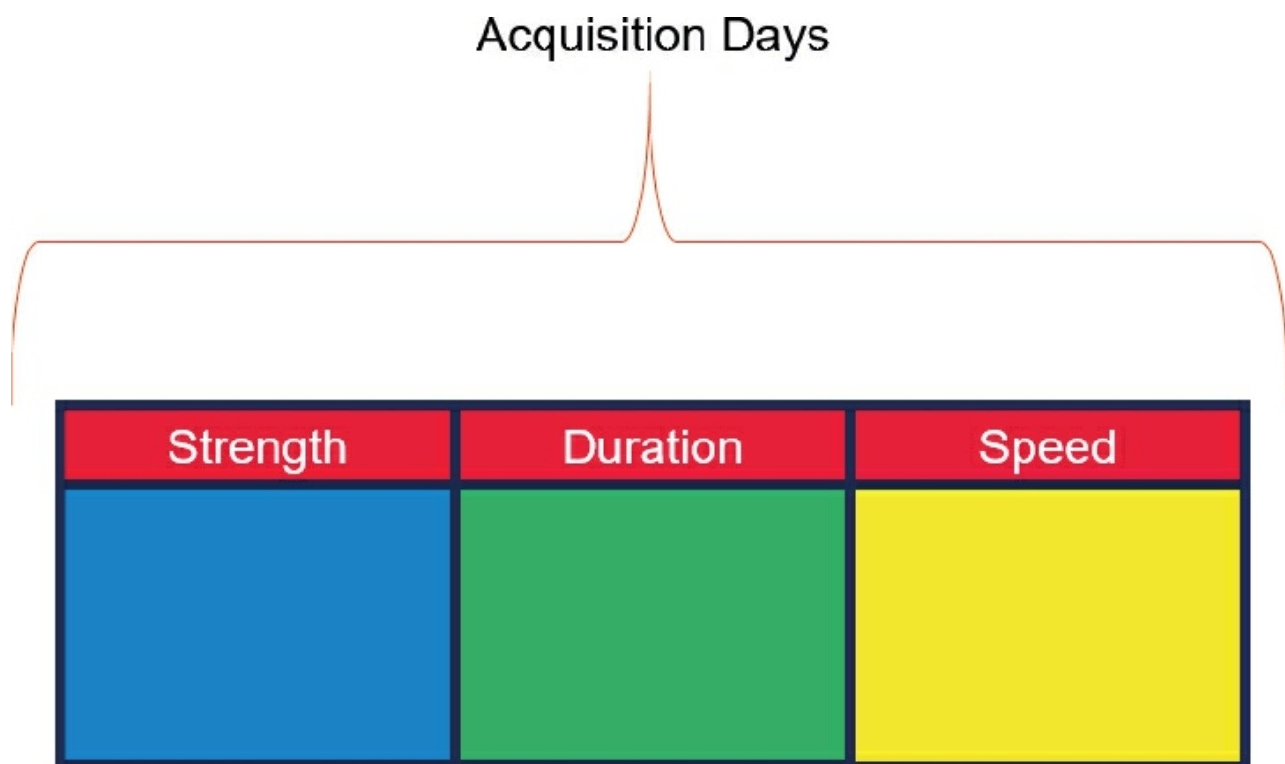
Here is a breakdown of each phase of the morphocycle, and the relevant information regarding their planning and use.

ACQUISITION DAYS

The real key to understanding tactical periodization is to use your understanding of the game to interpret how you should create your game model. I can't tell you how your team should play. That is for you to determine and interpret, based on all of the information above.

Now we are ready to look at the planning details of tactical periodization. When we talk about tactical periodization from a

planning standpoint, there is a methodological matrix that helps us apply the principles of periodization. For example, *horizontal alternation in specificity* means that we are planning our sessions in order to vary the physical systems stressed and the muscular contractions made. This brings us to the acquisition days. In simple terms, these days are the days where our players acquire knowledge about the game model, stress to their physical systems to improve their specific fitness and physical capabilities, and so on. These are our development days, in other words. However, Nick warns that the physical components should not be taken literally and trained in isolation. “The most important thing to remember is that no matter the physical component we are training under, we are still training the game model. A speed day doesn’t mean we run sprints. We are still playing soccer, but we vary the muscular contraction, size of the pitch, number of players, and principles to avoid carrying fatigue over from one session to another.”



The acquisition days are broken down as follows:

The aim of these acquisition days is to train different principles and sub-principles of the game model or playing style. In addition, they each emphasize a different muscle contraction that is required to execute soccer actions. The three main muscular contractions used in soccer are tension (strength), velocity (speed), and endurance (duration). The purpose of varying these muscular contractions is to ensure that we are not over-training certain muscular contractions or carrying fatigue into the next match. It also allows us to direct our exercises to promote a dominance of the specific contractions we want to feature and train.

The way you can look at these days is as follows:

Training strength involves a high density of accelerations and decelerations, and a lot of changes of direction with plenty of duels, jumping, and shooting. We are trying to overload the interaction between eccentric to concentric muscle contractions. These exercises should be performed in smaller areas, with a limited number of players. Our activities should be short in duration, and the rest periods should be long in order to ensure that the players are fully recovered and ready to make explosive actions again. The strength—or tension—day is typically the longest session of the week. It involves very demanding efforts with long recuperation periods.

In addition to the muscular contraction focus, tension days also focus on sub-principles and sub-sub-principles. Due to the use of small spaces with a low number of players, the goal would be to train various sub-principles or sub-sub-principles of the game model.

Duration days should reflect actions and effort similar to what we see in the game. On these days, we are using bigger areas, a larger number of players, and a longer duration of activities. Endurance—or duration—days also pay close attention to the large principles of the game model. The demands placed on the players should be very similar to the demands of competition. Tactical attention is predominantly paid to the large principles affecting the four moments of the game. In addition to playing for longer durations, the training activities should also have very short rest periods in order to maintain the continuity of the training to reflect

the continuity of competition. The durations should be longer, but not so long that the intensity of effort is reduced. For example, it is better to play two rounds of 10 minutes than one round of 20 minutes.

Speed—or velocity—days are not necessarily related to the physical capacity of speed, but more to cognitive speed. These exercises should promote a high speed of decision making, execution, and action. Speed days should involve pitch sizes and a number of players that allow the players to achieve the intended objectives. This means that there should be fewer opponents on these days (5v3, for example). The duration of these exercises should be short, and the rest should allow for full recovery.

Velocity days also focus on the sub-principles and sub-sub-principles of the game model. The sub-principles and sub-sub-principles trained should attend to the inter-sectorial, sectorial, and especially the individual tasks relevant to the game model. Training tasks on this day should also include very little opposition. The focus is on the speed of execution of decisions.

ACTIVE RECOVERY AND ACTIVATION DAYS

Obviously, this day is aimed at helping the players recover from the match. The goal is to accelerate the recovery of the players. However, aspects of the game model should still be trained on this day as long as the periods of work are very short and the rest periods very long. Usually, teams will use small-area games

with large numbers of players on these days in order to minimize the actions made by the players. For example, Dave Tenney, high-performance director for the Seattle Sounders, will have his team play 11v11 in a very tight area to maintain aspects of the game models, but with no further muscle damage. Vitor Frade believes that in order to improve the recovery processes, the energetic pathways must be stimulated in a similar fashion to how they are stimulated in the game. Therefore, recovery days should include aspects of the game model trained in a very intense way, but for very short durations, and with long recovery periods.

The goal of the activation day is to accelerate the recovery of the players following the acquisition days. These days should look to recreate moments or parts of the game that will be integral in the upcoming match. However, these should be trained for very short durations with very small volumes (only a few repetitions). These days should also utilize longer rest periods.

Activation days should not be very complex in nature either. The goal is to taper the cognitive demand of training prior to the match day. Relevant sub-principles that will be important for the next day's match should be the predominant use of training time, but trained for very short durations. The training duration for this day should be very short.

OFF DAYS

Research shows that players are typically more sore and fatigued

48 hours following a match. However, tactical periodization does not just look at the physiology in isolation. The cognitive demands of a match are considered in planning the off day. Due to the emotional and cognitive demands of the game, it is often difficult for players to fall asleep the night of a match day. When you compound that with the emotional load of the match—let’s say that a team just lost in extra time—Vitor Frade recommends giving the day after the match off for players to spend with their families, and to recover physically, cognitively, and emotionally from the match the previous day. Additionally, because we want to address specific aspects of the game model, even on recovery days, it is important to consider the cognitive status of the team. If a recovery day is chosen for the day after the game, the concentration of the players may be very low, which would render the recovery session less effective.

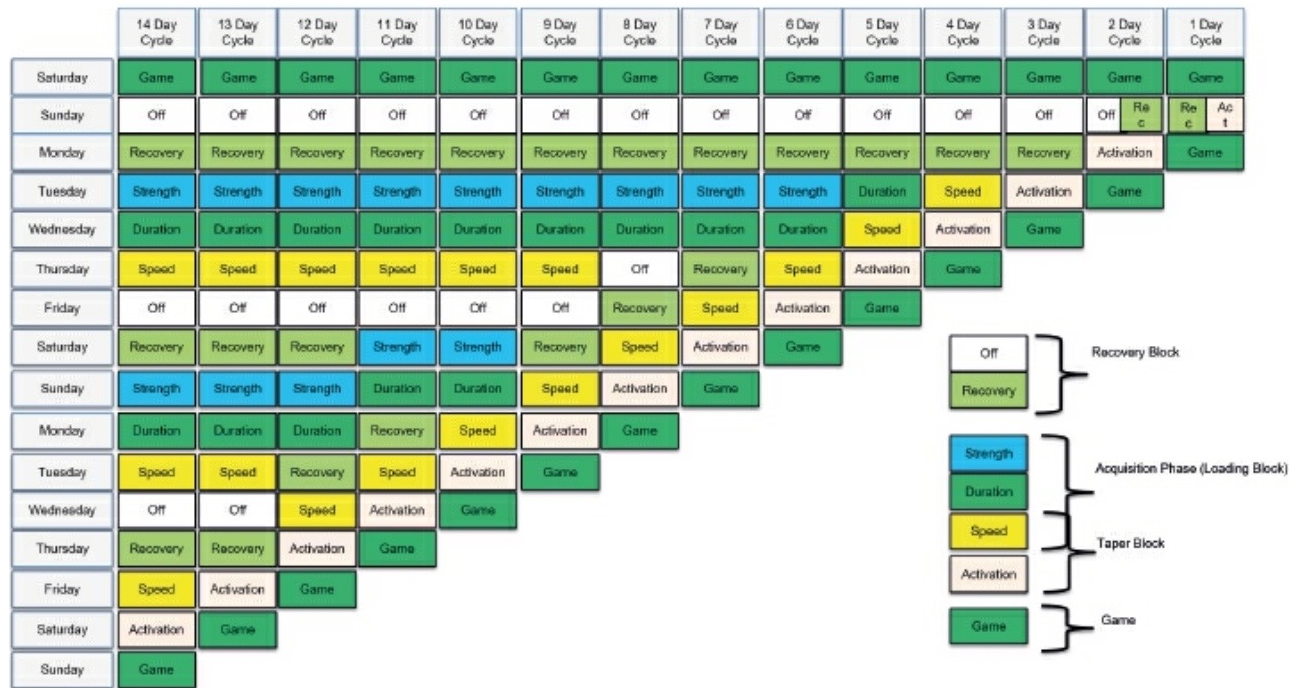
Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Game Day	Active Recovery	Activation	Game Day	Day Off	Active Recovery	Activation	Game Day

MULTIPLE-GAME WEEKS

During multiple-game weeks, the acquisition days are the first days to be removed. If there is a midweek game, resulting in a three-game week, then acquisition days would be out of the question. The major aim of the weekly preparations would be geared toward recovering from the previous match and activating the players for the next match.

As a college coach, Nick Cowell deals mostly with this morpho-cycle. “In college, most of our season is recovery. We don’t get a chance to do strength, endurance, and speed very often. One of the mistakes I made when I first started implementing tactical periodization was that I wanted more acquisition days and less recovery time. Unfortunately, that doesn’t work. The priority has to be recovery. From there, you can see where acquisition days fit in.”

Acquisition days are not used during this type of morphocycle, which means that recovery and activation days need to be used wisely in order to continue teaching the players aspects of the game model. It is not uncommon for players to forget principles and sub-principles of the game model during periods with a lot of recovery days, matches, and activation days. The coach needs to find ways to keep the game model and the playing philosophy of the team alive during these periods. Jose Mourinho uses video analysis to remind players of principles, and to even show sub-principles or sub-sub-principles that may be different based on the upcoming opponent. Video is a very useful tool because it helps keep the game model alive while not overloading the players from a physiological standpoint. Jose Mourinho will often use activation days to play very short 11v11 games in order to re-visit aspects of the game model as a tune-up for the match.



Here is a template that you can use to plan your weekly morphocycle’s depending on the amount of time you have between matches.

Jose Mourinho—by far the most popular user of tactical periodization—knows that soccer is about a team being adapted to a specific way of playing. A journalist asked Mourinho about his ideal team. His answer reflected the importance of tactical periodization as his training methodology. “It would be one where, at any given time, at any given situation, all my players think the same way.” Tactical periodization is not about getting faster or stronger, or jumping higher. It is about acquiring a certain way of playing.

Nick Cowell has been using tactical periodization for nearly three

seasons. The second winningest NCAA D2 coach in the country has seen the benefits. “It really forced me to specify and be clearer about what I wanted them to do, so just from an organizational standpoint we have improved so much. The players are also less fatigued at the end of the season. My original goal was met too, which is that our team’s performance is much more stable. We don’t have stretches anymore where we have one good game and then one bad game. Our performances are fairly stable. Finally, we are much more prepared tactically, which manifests itself in how we behave as a team in the four moments of the game. There are times when I see all eleven players on my team think as one and, as Mourinho says, that is the goal of training.”